

## CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) In a data processing system with a distributed architecture including a plurality of processing entities, each entity playing at least one of a plurality of predetermined roles in the system, a method of configuring the entities ~~including the steps of~~ comprising:

defining a target configuration for each role based on a reference model for a software product, the reference model specifying for each role, components of the software product that are to be installed on an entity having the role,

defining, in a transition table data structure, for each current state/target state pair of each component of the software product, an identifier of one or more actions required to reach the target state from the current state,

identifying [[the]] at least one role of each entity in the plurality of processing entities, and

configuring each entity according to [[the]] a target configuration corresponding to the at least one role of the entity based on the current state/target state pairs in the transition table data structure, wherein:

the plurality of roles includes at least one physic role defined by an architecture of the system and at least one logic role defined by a software application installed in the system,

an indication of the physic role of each entity in a first set of entities of the plurality of processing entities is stored in a memory structure at an installation of the entity in the system, the step of identifying the at least one role of each entity in the first set of entities including retrieving the indication of the corresponding physic role from the memory structure,

the software application includes a plurality of software features, each logic role being associated with a corresponding software feature, and wherein identifying the at least one role of each entity in the plurality of processing entities includes:

detecting the software feature installed on the entity, and

establishing the logic role according to the installed software feature, and

wherein configuring each entity according to the target configuration includes:

detecting a current configuration of the entity,  
identifying at least one action required to reach the target configuration  
from the current configuration, and  
executing the at least one action.

2-12. (Canceled)